A LETTER *from Mr* William Baxter *to Dr* Hans Sloane, *R. S. Secr. containing an Account of a Book Intituled,* Archæologia Britannica, *giving some account Additional to what has hitherto been Published, of the Languages, Histories and Customs of the Original Inhabitants of* Great Britain : *From Collections and Observations in Travels through* Wales, Cornwal, Bas-Bretagne, Ireland *and* Scotland, *By* Edward Lhuyd, M. A. *of* Jesus College, *Keeper of the* Ashmolean Museum *in Oxford.* Vol. I. *Containing,* 1. *A Comparative Etymology; or, Remarks on the Alteration of Languages.* 2. *A Latin-Celtick Dictionary; Or, a Vocabulary of the Original Languages of* Britain *and* Ireland. 3. *An Armoric Grammar.* 4. *An Armoric English Vocabulary.* 5. *Some* Welsh *Words omitted in Dr.* Davies's *Dictionary.* 6. *A* Cornish *Grammar.* 7. *A Catalogue of* British *Manuscripts.* 8. *an Essay towards a* British *Etymologicon.* 9. *A brief Introduction to the* Irish *or Ancient* Scotish *Language.* 10. *An* Irish-English *Dictonary.* Oxford, *Printed at the* Theatre *for the Author,* MDCCVII. *And delivered at the* Ashmolean Museum. *Fol. of* 116 *Sheets.*

I Have carefully perus'd this First Volume of Mr. *Lhuyd's Archæologia Britannica,* or *Glossography*; and am bold to say that nothing in this kind has appeared in Publick, within my knowledge, this Century to be compared unto it; whether we consider the Elaborateness of the Work, the Skill and Judgment of the Compiler, or the usefulness of it to illustrate the most Ancient part of our History; and trace out the Original Inhabitants, and *Brigantic* and *Belgic* Colonies: Similitude of Languages, and of Rites and Religious Opinions, being by that great Author of Historiography, *Herodotus Halicarnassensis,* deservedly accounted the most established Rules for such Discoveries. The Ingenious and Learned Author has very candidly and truly represented his own Undertaking in his *English Preface,* and in that curious Letter written to my Lord Bishop of *Hereford*; to which I refer you. In his *British* Epistle to his own Countrymen, he delivers his very weighty Reasons for altering the Vulgar Alphabet of the *Welsh*; and justifies it from the Authority of Ancient MSS. and Inscriptions upon Stones in several parts of our Country. Next he Learnedly refutes the Opinion of the *Saxons* receiving their Alphabet from *Austin* the *Monk,* and shews that the same Characters are still extant on the Tomb-Stone of *Kadvan* King of *Guynedh* in the Church call'd *Lhan Gadwaladar* in the Isle of *Anglesey,* who was one of the *British* Princes in that Famous Battle of *Bangor is y coed* fought against those *Saxons* whom *Austin* had influenced to Massacre the *British Monks.* Indeed all the Sepulchral Inscriptions in Mr *Camden's Britannia* abundantly prove the use of the

Roman Alphabet in this Noble Province, from whence the Ancient *Britiſh* or (as now commonly call'd) *Saxon*, and *Iriſh* Alphabets are very ſmall Deviations, unavoidably introduced by Time and the Arbitrary uſe of Writing. What he next proceeds to, ſeems much more owing to his Modeſty than of any real neceſſity: I mean his excuſing the time he employ'd in this great Undertaking; for that may well ſeem to any Judicious and Impartial Peruſer, to have rather been the product of an Age than of thoſe few Years ſince his return from his Travels. What he ſays for putting thoſe four Languages into one Book is very reaſonable; in regard none of theſe very Antient Dialects can be adjuſted, but by being compared with the others. The *Scotiſh* Language (which by a large Liſt of words in the *Baſque* and *Iriſh* is here ſufficiently demonſtrated to be a branch of the Old *Spaniſh*) he ſhews to be intermixt with the Ancient *Gwydheleg* or *Britiſh-Iriſh*; as alſo that theſe *Gwydhelians* were the moſt Ancient Colonies of *Galls* here, and probably forced by the Anceſtors of the *Britans* into *Scotland* and *Ireland*; the *Picts* being by the *Britiſh* Writers term'd *Guydhyl Fichtied*; and *Iriſh* words ſuch as *uisg*, *Ban*, *Lhuch*, *Drim*, &c. ſtill continúing to be names of *Britiſh* Rivers and Mountains: As alſo numbers of words (ſuch as *Corlan*, *Blith*, and the like) in the preſent *Britiſh*, whoſe Etymologies are only found in the *Guydhelian* or *Iriſh* Dialect, now diſguiſed by the *Scotic*. This *Guydhelian* Tongue he Learnedly proves from Ancient *Celtic* words, and Names of Places in the *Roman Geography*, to have been alſo the Language of *Gaul*. For my own part, I muſt confeſs, I look upon our *Britiſh* (the Origin whereof he defers till another occaſion) to be a Branch of that Antient *Belgic*, that was ſpoken by the *Galli Senones*, who poſſeſs'd all the lower parts of *Germany*, until the Invaſion of the *Kimerian Saxons* or *Kimbrians* from the *Palus Mæotis*, whence our *Celto-Scythe*, or preſent *German*, of which ſee *Poſſidonious* in *Strabo*. Laſtly, he does not prove by the Authority of the *Triades*, (a ſmall Britiſh Tract written according to the Judgment of that moſt Learned Antiquary Mr *Robert Vaughan* of *Hengurt* about a Thouſand Years ago) that there was a very numerous Colony made in very early Times out of Great *Britain* into *Vaſconia*; but alſo confirms by a large Catalogue of *Britiſh* words in the preſent *Gaſgoin*, the mixture of both People, even there as well as in *Ireland*. His *Comparative Etymology* is ſo Methodically, Artfully, and Judiciouſly digeſted, ſo admirably projected by the beſt Cannons as well of Critique as of Grammar, that it recommends it's ſelf *prima facie* to the niceſt Palate, and ſufficiently provides it ſelf againſt diſingenuous Cavillers. His *Harmonicon* in Latin, *Britiſh* and *Iriſh* is a Noble *Promptuarium* of all the Britiſh Dialects; a Work of much Labour and Judgment, and which cannot but be acceptable to the Curious in Foreign Countries. It were indeed to be wiſh'd the whole were tranſlated into *Latin*; Scholars abroad having generally a greater Curioſity this way than as yet we ſeem to have in *England*. Father *Julian Manoir's Armoric* Grammar is a valuable Curioſity, and illuſtrates the Work;

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it having ſcarce been ever heard of in our Country; and the *Armoric Dictionary* added to it, ſupplies in a great meaſure the defect of the *Corniſh* one promiſed in the next Volume. In the *Corniſh Grammar* our Judicious Author ſeems to excell himſelf. You have there the Hiſtory of our Britiſh Alphabets nicely and accurately handled, with a very Curious and Diverting variety of things. You have alſo a conſiderable Supplement to Dr *Davies*'s Learned Dictionary. He has infinitely oblig'd the Ancient *Britans* of *Cornwal* by preſerving their Language to Poſterity, when juſt expiring. I cannot omit ſaying thus much of that Noble Dialect of the Britiſh; that it appears as capable of Artful Management and Grammar Rules, as the moſt refined Languages: Indeed the *Celtic* Tongues in general ſeem to have been very Antiently refined, and I queſtion not the truth of what is hinted in that incomparable Letter of our Author to the Lord Biſhop of *Hereford*, that they were the very Ground-work of *Greek* and *Latin* Grammars; not only the *Cantabrian* or *Scotic* part of our *Iriſh*, but even the Noble *Teutonic* Dialects themſelves ſo, Learnedly recommended by the incomparabe Dr *Hicks* in his late *Theſaurus*, ſeeming but defective, if compar'd as to Art and Variety with our Britiſh. The Learned World will therefore the leſs wonder if Father *Molloy* was able to perform ſo little of the Grammarian's part in his *Iriſh Grammar*. The Declenſions of *Nouns* and *Pronouns* I muſt own to be moſtly upon the *Britiſh* Plan; but the Verb, which is the Ground-work or Baſis of every Regular Tongue, ſeems as in all uncultivated Languages, wild and unaccountable. In the *Catalogue* of *Britiſh MSS.* our Author has conſulted the Reader's time by compoſing it in Order of Alphabet, with Abbreviations directing to the *Studies* where they may be ſeen at preſent; and alſo his advantage by diſtinguiſhing always betwixt Tracts and ſingle Papers, and betwixt perfect Treatiſes and imperfect; giving a more particular account of ſuch pieces as ſeem to deſerve it, and diſmiſſing the uſeleſs Poets of the two laſt Centuries with only the bare mentioning them. Nor has he ſhew'd more Induſtry and Judgment in this and the other Titles of this Work than has been (for the extent of it) ſucceſsfully imitated by his Ingenious Fellow-Traveller Mr *Parry* in his Excellent *Eſſay towards a Britiſh Etymologicon*, where he has Modeſtly parallell'd the greateſt part of the Britiſh Radicals with thoſe words that ſeem'd agreable therewith in any other Language; without pretending to determine the point of Precedency as to Antiquity, which has been too much the boldneſs of the late Learned *Monſieur Pezron*, and indeed of moſt other Etymologiſts. The *Iriſh Focloir* or *Dictionary* ſo induſtriouſly compiled by our Learned Antiquary, and ſupply'd with a large Appendix of omitted words from *Scotland* and *Ireland*, cannot (beſides the great Service it muſt needs contribute to the Inhabitants of thoſe Countries) but be judged of conſiderable uſe to Criticks in the *Britiſh* and *Celtic*; The *Guydhelian* part of that Language, being that which was ſpoken by the moſt Ancient Colony of the *Celts* in this Iſland and conſequently containing the Etymologies of vaſt Numbers of

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Britiſh Derivations and Compounds otherwiſe not to be accounted for.

The ſingular Generoſity of thoſe amongſt the Nobility and Gentry, who have ſo liberally contributed to the Expences of the Author's Travels, in order to qualifie him for ſo uncommon an Undertaking, has (as you know very well) beſides their Names prefixt to this Volume, been gratefully acknowledg'd in the Preface of a Latin Book publiſh'd during his Travels. Nor can indeed ſo laudable an Act be ever too much celebrated, there being no other Method of rendering one capable of ſuch a Task, but thoſe Travels through the remoteſt parts of *Britain* and *Ireland*, which he has upon that Encouragement ſo ſucceſsfully perform'd.

One would think that in this Learned and Curious Age nothing need be urg'd as to the uſefulneſs of Preſerving in Writing theſe Original Languages of *Britain* and *Ireland*. But yet ſo Subject is Humane Nature to Prejudice, and ſo apt to entertain the eaſy Humour of Jeſting, rather than that more Thoughtful one of conſidering Subjects, and examining them; that I find a great many Gentlemen, otherwiſe very ſenſible and Ingenious, are at a loſs herein. The uſe of commiting to Writing theſe now almoſt Antiquated Languages is what the Author has truly hinted in his Dedication and Prefaces: Namely the tracing out the Original Inhabitants of theſe parts of Europe; the Interpretation of the Names of Perſons and Places in the *Roman* Hiſtory and Geography, not only of *Gaul*, *Britain* and *Ireland*, but in a great meaſure alſo of *Italy* and *Spain*; the Improvement of ſuch Work of Learned and deſervedly Eminent Men as the Etymological Dictionaries of *Voſſius* and *Menage*; the explaining ſuch paſſages in the Greek and Latin Writers as relate to the Rites and Manners of the *Gauls*, *Britains*, &c. by a diligent peruſal of the Ancient Poets, and ſuch others of the Oldeſt Writers as are extant in theſe Languages. As for ſuch as ſhall anſwer, that tho' all this ſhould be granted, yet ſtill theſe are but trifling and uſeleſs Diſquiſitions; 'tis plain they ſpeak ſo unlike Scholars, as not to require any further Reply.

I cannot conclude without taking notice of one Calumny that has been whiſper'd about by Men of Paſſion or Intreague, *viz.* That this Book is deſign'd to ſerve a certain Intereſt. I therefore think my ſelf oblig'd in Juſtice, to certifie to the Publick, that after a careful peruſal of all the Parts of this Work, I cannot diſcern a Syllable any where that in the leaſt tends to favour any Party, or is any way concern'd in any National Diſtinction; and that the Author every where diſcovers himſelf a Man of Candor and above Partiality. I have not, I confeſs, had the Happineſs of a Perſonal Acquaintance with him, but I preſume I may, as our Bleſſed Saviour directs, *Judge of a Tree by its Fruit.*

FINIS.